

Message Text

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62

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 SAM-01 DRC-01 /155 W

----- 030122

R 251615Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4034

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USUN NEW YORK 863

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF, WA

SUBJ: A VERY QUALIFIED STEP FORWARD BY WHITE RULERS OF NAMIBIA

REF: CAPE TOWN 0571 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY. SWA NATIONAL PARTY'S PROPOSAL FOR MULTIRACIAL TALKS APPEARS TO BE MOVE IN RIGHT DIRECTION, BUT IS NOT INTENDED TO LEAD TOWARD MAJORITY-RULED UNITARY STATE IN NAMIBIA. BECAUSE OF ITS EMPHASIS ON "PUPULATION GROUPS," PROPOSAL UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE VIEWED WITH DEEP SUSPICION BY CRITICS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S PRESENCE IN AND ITS POLICIES FOR THE TERRITORY. EMBASSY BELIEVES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAG AND WHITE LEADERS IN NAMIBIA WANT A CONFEDERAL ARRANGEMENT IN

WHICH EFFECTIVE WHITE CONTROL WOULD BE MAINTAINED AND EACH ETHNIC GROUP WOULD HAVE A TERRITORY IN WHICH IT WOULD CONTROL ITS OWN AFFAIRS. ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROPOSAL IMPLIES FREE AND OPEN SELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO TALKS, BUT LEAVES UNANSWERED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS,

E.G., METHOD OF SELECTION FOR VARIOUS GROUPS AND TIME FRAME INVOLVED. REACTION AMONG WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS HAS BEEN FAVORABLE. RESPONSE OF NAMIBIAN BLACKS SO FAR HAS RANGED FROM APPROVAL TO ABSOLUTE REJECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. REFTEL OUTLINED CONTENT OF ANNOUNCEMENT BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL PARTY OF SWA REGARDING ITS INTENTION TO HOLD TALKS WITH "ALL POPULATION GROUPS" IN NAMIBIA IN ORDER TO FIND A SOLUTION FOR NAMIBIAN PROBLEM WHICH COULD BE SUPPORTED BY ALL. WHILE THIS MOVE BY NATIONALIST RULERS OF THE TERRITORY MARKS A STEP AWAY FROM STATUS QUO, IT BEARS EXAMINATION FOR WHAT IT DOES NOT REPRESENT AS WELL AS WHAT IT DOES.

2. SAG AND NATIONALIST LEADERS IN SWA EVIDENTLY HAVE DECIDED THEY CANNOT IMPOSE ON NAMIBIA AN EXACT CARBON COPY OF BANTUSTAN POLICY AS IT APPLIES IN THE REPUBLIC. AND THEY ARE SEARCHING FOR A MEASURE OF ACTIVE COOPERATION BY NON-WHITES IN ACHIEVEMENT OF NEW POLITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE TERRITORY. AIM OF WHITES, HOWEVER, CONTINUES TO BE TO MAINTAIN "WHITE IDENTITY" IN A DISCRETE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA WHICH WOULD PRESERVE FOR THEM MAJOR SHARE OF NAMIBIA'S MINERAL AND AGRICULTURAL WEALTH.

3. THIS GOAL COULD NOT BE REALIZED IN CREATION OF A UNITARY STATE IN WHICH WHITES WOULD BE BUT ONE OF A NUMBER OF MINORITY TRIBES AND IN WHICH DOMINATION OF WHITES BY BLACKS WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THUS STATEMENT ISSUED YESTERDAY CLEARLY SPELLS OUT THAT EACH POPULATION GROUP WILL CHOOSE ITS OWN REPRESENTATIVES AND THAT EVENTUAL SOLUTION WILL HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL GROUPS. AS PRIME MINISTER VORSTER HAS STATED ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION, NO GROUP (READ WHITES) WOULD BE FORCED INTO ANY KIND OF ASSOCIATION IT REGARDED AS INIMICAL TO ITS OWN WISHES.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT DID NOT GO INTO DETAILS OF WHAT KIND OF ARRANGEMENT WILL BE SOUGHT, BUT INFORMATION WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING FROM RELIABLE SOURCES FOR SOME MONTHS INDICATES THAT MOST LIKELY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHITES HAVE SOME SORT OF CONFEDERAL SYSTEM IN MIND. OWAMBO, BY FAR MOST POPULOUS OF ETHNIC GROUPS, COULD GO ITS OWN WAY OR CONCEIVABLY COULD BE PART OF CONFEDERATION AS LONG AS THERE AN IRON-CLAD GUARANTEE THAT WOULD PREVENT DOMINANCE BY OWAMBOS OVER OTHER GROUPS. WE ARE TOLD THAT NATIONALISTS FEEL AT THIS STAGE THAT NO ETHNIC GROUP/REGION SHOULD BE ABLE TO BECOME INDEPENDENT UNILATERALLY. THIS WOULD NOT PRECLUDE AN INDEPENDENT OWAMBO, THOUGH, FOR IN ADDITION TO WHITES OTHER GROUPS IN NAMIBIA HARBOR

FEAR OF OVAMBO DOMINATION AND MIGHT WELL AGREE TO LET OWAMBO OPT FOR INDEPENDENCE.

5. ULTIMATELY, THEN, THERE WOULD BE A CONFEDERATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS, EACH OF WHICH WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS OWN AFFAIRS, EXCEPT FOR THOSE MATTERS WHICH BY COMMON CONSENT WOULD BE DECIDED BY GROUPS ACTING AS A WHOLE. IN REACHING THIS OR WHATEVER OTHER ARRANGEMENT THAT MIGHT EVENTUATE, ACCORDING TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S ANNOUNCEMENT REPRESENTATIVES FOR TALKS WOULD BE CHOSEN BY "PEOPLE AS A WHOLE" OF EACH GROUP. IN SOME CASES, WHERE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP FULLY ACCEPTED BY PEOPLE, E.G., EAST CAPRIVI, PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF "HOMELAND" WILL BE SELECTED. BUT IN OWAMBO, WHERE TRADITIONAL LEADERS FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES HAVE BEEN REPUDIATED BY MAJORITY OF PEOPLE, PRESUMABLY AN OPEN ELECTION MIGHT BE IN THE OFFING. (A SOURCE IN WINDHOEK SAYS SAG WILL PUT PRESSURE ON OVAMBO AUTHORITIES TO HOLD FREE ELECTION WITHIN A YEAR.) IN OTHER AREAS WHERE TRUE LEADERSHIP IS IN DISPUTE, E.G., HEREROLAND, A SATISFACTORY WAY TO CHOOSE REPRESENTATIVES WILL HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT.

6. BECAUSE OF VAGUENESS OF ANNOUNCEMENT, IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ARE UNANSWERED. WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME ENVISAGED FOR SELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES? AGAIN, WHAT WILL METHOD OF SELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES BE? ONCE A MULTIRACIAL BODY IS CHOSEN, HOW WILL ITS DECISIONS BE REACHED? BECAUSE OF SUCH QUESTIONS AND BECAUSE ANNOUNCEMENT FALLS FAR SHORT OF LEADING DIRECTLY TO A FREE, INDEPENDENT, UNITED NAMIBIA (WHICH REMAINS A DEMAND OF MANY AFRICANS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE NAMIBIA) NATIONAL PARTY PROPOSAL HAS NOT BEEN UNIVERSALLY EMBRACED.

7. IN SOUTH AFRICA, ENGLISH-LANGUAGE AS WELL AS AFRIKAANS PRESS COMMENT HAS BEEN GENERALLY QUITE FAVORABLE. IN ADDITION, OPPOSITION UNITED PARTY'S LEADER, SIR DE VILLIERS GRAAFF, PBUYX ALTHOUGH PROPOSAL VAGUE AND NEBULOUS, IT REPRESENTED WELCOME CHANGE IN ATTITUDE. PROGRESSIVE PARTY LEADER COLIN EGLIN CALLED ANNOUNCEMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION, BUT SAID VORSTER SHOULD ESTABLISH A TIME-TABLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION OF SWA. IN NAMIBIA, SWAPO NATIONAL CHAIRMAN DAVID MERERO (WHOSE TRIAL UNDER SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNISM ACT WILL RECOMMENCE OCTOBER 14) SAID HE WANTED TO STUDY TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE COMMENTING ON IT. CHIEF CLEMENS KAPUUBO SAID SAME THING. HOWEVER, J.G.A. DIEGAART, LEADER OF ANTI-SAG BASTER VOLKSPARTEI, STATED HE THOUGHT BASTERS COULD ACCEPT ANNOUNCEMENT AS POSITIVE STEP AND PARTICIPATE IN TALKS. ON OTHER HAND, SWANU'S LEADER, GERSON VEII, UTTERLY REJECTED NATIONALISTS' PROPOSAL AS SAME OLD THING IN ANOTHER GUISE, AS ANOTHER METHOD OF DIVIDE AND RULE.

8. IT WOULD SEEM THAT EAST CAPRIVIANS, KAVANGOS, COLOREDS, NAMAS AND APPARENTLY BASTERS WILL ACCEPT PROPOSAL FOR MULTIRACIAL TALKS. OWAMBO GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO GIVE APPROVAL, BUT SWAPO (IN

NAMIBIA) MAY HAVE A CONTRARY OPINION. DAMARA'S ARE WIDELY DISPERSED (ONLY A FEW THOUSAND OF 60,000 DAMARAS RESIDE IN DAMARA HOMELAND) AND IT DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW A DAMARA CONSENSUS COULD BE REACHED ON WHO WOULD REPRESENT ALL OF DAMARA PEOPLE. HEREROS ARE DIVIDED, BUT CHIEF KAPUUNO CAN PROBABLY COUNT ON MAJORITY TO FOLLOW HIS DECISION ON MATTER. KAKOVELDERS (WHO ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO HEREROS) WILL DO WHAT KAPUUNO DOES. OBVIOUSLY KAPUUNO'S POSITION ON PROPOSALS LOOMS AS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN DEGREE OF ACCEPTANCE BY NAMIBIAN BLACKS.

9. IN MEANTIME, PRIME MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SWA HAS GATHERED IN CAPE TOWN FOR TWO-DAY MEETING WHICH BEGINS SEPTEMBER 26. IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED THAT COUNCIL, WHICH NEVER HAS WON ACCEPTANCE AS BEING A BODY REPRESENTATIVE OF NAMIBIAN PEOPLE, WOULD HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE IT COULD DO SOMETHING MORE THAN TALK WITH VORSTER IF IT WAS TO SHAKE OFF ITS PUPPET LABEL. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER, IN VIEW OF INITIATIVE TAKEN BY SWA NATIONAL PARTY, SAG IS DISPOSED TO HAVE ADVISORY COUNCIL TAKE YET ANOTHER STEP TOWARD ALTERING STATUS QUO IN NAMIBIA.
HURD.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POPULATION, POLITICAL LEADERS, DESEGREGATION, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAPET00575
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740272-0511
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740916/aaaaaanks.tel
Line Count: 189
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: CAPE TOWN 0571 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 JUN 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <12 MAR 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: A VERY QUALIFIED STEP FORWARD BY WHITE RULERS OF NAMIBIA
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SF, WA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005